

Speech by Mr. HIGUCHI Yoshihiro
Minister/Deputy Chief of Mission,
Embassy of Japan in the Kingdom of Cambodia
at the inauguration Ceremony of Kauk Banhchoan Lower Secondary School,
Phnom Penh, September 20, 2013

- Venerable monks,
- H. E. Mr. PA Socheat Vong, Governor of Phnom Capital City,
- Excellencies, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend today's inauguration ceremony here at the Kauk Banhchoan Lower Secondary School, with the presence of H.E. Mr. PA Socheat Vong, Governor of Phnom Penh Capital City. First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Governor and his staff for holding this ceremony.

I am particularly glad that this ceremony is conducted in the special context of this year 2013 which marks the 60th anniversary of Japan-Cambodia Friendship.

For the past two decades since the end of civil war, Cambodia has made strenuous efforts for its reconstruction and development, and it has reached a point where its economic growth rate is one of the highest even in the fast growing ASEAN region. Also in the field of education, both quantity and quality have been continuously improving year by year.

I would like to commend the effort that the Cambodian Government deployed to improve the education sector. The Government of Japan as well, understanding the importance of the education for

achieving sustainable development, has been supporting Cambodia's efforts through construction of schools and training of teachers.

However, there still remain tremendous challenges for further improvement in the education sector. One of the urgent issues is to improve the enrolment rate at the lower secondary schooling, which has not reached a sufficient level due to a lack of schools.

I was briefed that at the Kauk Banhchoan Lower Secondary School, the students used the classrooms of a nearby primary school because of the lack of its own classrooms. Now that this new school building with 7 classrooms and sanitation facilities was completed, all the students have become able to study at their own school.

I am hopeful that the students of the Kauk Banhchoan Lower Secondary School will enjoy studying under the improved environment and will maintain the school building properly as a symbol of the friendship between Japan and the Kingdom of Cambodia for many years to come.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the people who have contributed to the smooth implementation of the project. I strongly hope that this cooperation will further strengthen the friendly relations between the Japanese and Cambodian people.

Thank you very much for your attention.